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Life and Death of a Super

He Had a Tantalizing Inside Story, and Eagerly Bought It—Even If They Had to

EDITOR'S NOTE: On November 17, 1982, Edwin Paul Wilson was convicted in US District Court in Alexandria of illegally smuggling pistols and an M-16 rifle to Libya in 1979. It was the first of the trials that would focus on international arms smuggling that netted Wilson and others millions of dollars.

A key figure in the case was Kevin Mulcahy, the alcoholic ex-agent whose obsessive pursuit of Wilson carried him through many different roles: as undercover investigator, witness, and self-serving entrepreneur.

But his least-known role was as a journalistic "supersource" who at one time had the nation's leading networks and newspapers vying to exploit his insider's knowledge. Dale Van Atta, a reporter for the Jack Anderson column, who ferreted out much of the Wilson saga, reveals the game of journalistic intrigue played by Mulcahy.

Kevin Mulcahy, a onetime Central Intelligence Agency computer-and-communications specialist, was 35 when he first felt he had a story to tell to the press.

He phoned one of the biggest names in journalism, Bob Woodward of the *Washington Post*. When they met in Woodward's home on April 14, 1977, Mulcahy began to unravel the now-familiar tale of ex-CIA operator Edwin Paul Wilson and the school for spies and terrorists he had allegedly set up in Libya for Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Though Woodward had already published part of the story two days earlier, Mulcahy provided important additional information and at least half a dozen new leads. The story that would develop years later into a major one was filed away in a three-page memo and virtually forgotten by Woodward.

When Kevin Mulcahy decided to go public again in early 1981, he called me.

This time he wasn't willing to let the story drop, as he'd done with Woodward. Then, Mulcahy explained, he had been acting as an ad hoc FBI agent ferreting out Woodward's sources for them. Now he was serious about being a source himself. He offered to submit to long



Kevin Mulcahy was the ultimate source—when he was hot, news organizations were paying him thousands of dollars for information on arms smuggling by ex-CIA operatives. This picture of him was taken in late 1981.